

To: Connecticut General Assembly Committee on the Environment
From: Christine O'Neill
Date: January 28, 2023
Re: **In Favor of RB 6484**

Honorable Committee Members:

I write to you today as a Connecticut resident of 9 June Street, Wolcott, representing only myself. I hold a master's degree in Energy and Environmental Management and work as an Environmental Planner for my Council of Governments.

I whole-heartedly support any bill that protects the wellbeing of animals. Horseshoe crabs have been abused for decades, exploited for their blood under horribly inhumane conditions. Therefore, **I support RB 6484 and recommend it be strengthened:** change the term "hand-harvest" to "harvest" so that it includes any method, and increase the fine from twenty-five dollars to one thousand. The bill should also specify that the money collected from violators be spent on horseshoe crab protection (public education, habitat restoration, etc.).

Ending the harvest of these creatures is about more than just their own wellbeing; they are keystone species in the ecosystem of Long Island Sound. Their eggs provide food for shorebirds, crustaceans, and sharks. Marine organisms like barnacles and oysters hitch rides upon their carapaces. The shortage of these animals is well-documented, with sightings during the 2022 spawning season being the lowest in 20 years. We must put an end to this killing.

There is no reason for Connecticut to participate in this ruthless activity that harms animals. I implore you to afford these ancient creatures the respect that they deserve.

Thank you for your time.

All my best,

Christine O'Neill
9 June Street
Wolcott, CT